DROUGHT IN KALAHANDI : THE REAL STORY

Jagadish Pradhan

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FOREWORD

Many people and particularly most of the policy makers still consider Deficit of rainfall and water, Deficit of foodgrain, Over population, Deforestation etc. as the major culprits for the acute poverty in Kalahandi region.

How many more Indrawati Projects, Mega Rice Mills and Food For Work (no work ?) Projects and Family Planning Drive would they propose to curb the growing poverty in this region ?

In one hand while the policies of the state and other powers are consistently depriving the people from their livelihood base, on the other hand there is no dearth of publicity of projects in the name of improving their livelihood !

Are we committed to what we have been saying ? It is high time that we all seriously reflect on whatever we have done and achieved so far before taking any further action. For the sake of humanity, letus be careful of our actions which are likely to have the unintended effect of increasing the poverty and hunger in this region.

In this booklet we reproduce an article which was published almost a decade ago as we feel that it is as relevant today as it was in 1993. We hope this booklet will be of some use to those who have ventured to collaborate the people in the challenging task of eliminating poverty and hunger in Kalahandi region.

Advocacy and Communication Cell

15 October 2001

Sahabhagi Vikash Abhiyan
Bhubaneswar

DROUGHT IN KALAHANDI : THE REAL STORY

The problems of Kalahandi are not unique. Many other drought-prone areas of Orissa and the adjoining states suffer from more or less the same pattern of distress, which is rooted in the destorted development perspectives of the state.

Kalahandi in the recent years has become synonymcus with drought, starvation, poverty and all such maladies of the human world. Not surprisingly therefore, ever since the mid-80s 'Kalahandi' has been hitting the headlines in the regional as well as national newspapers and magazines. Between 1986 and 1988 three prime ministers have visited the district a number of times to assess the gravity of starvation deaths, child selling and human beings surviving on mere grass and inedible roots, etc. Governments have been claiming that a number of special schemes, to change the situation in Kalahandi, have already been taken. Researchers and academicians have undrertaken research on the various aspects of the drought in Kalahandi.

Is drought the real problem in Kalahandi ? The shortage of rainfall has always been held to be the culprit. From Table 1 we see that during the period 1977 to 1988 the average annual rainfall in Kalahandi has been 1,254.9mm, which is quite impressive. In seven years during this period the rainfall in Kalahandi has been more than the average rainfall of Orissa. Only in five years it has been less then the state average. Further, those five years also cannot be called the drought years in Kalahandi. During the past 20 years, 1988 has recorded the lowest rainfall in the district – around 978 mm. During 1990-91, Kalahandi had a rainfall of 2,247mm. highest recorded in decades. Can we say then that deficit rainfalls is the cause of drought (meteorological drought and agricultural drought...) which leads to poverty ? The problems then must lie elsewhere.

TABLE 1 : RAINFALL IN KALAHANDI AND ORISSA (ANNUAL) DURING 1977-91

Year	Kalahandi	(in mm) Orissa
1977	135.7*	1327.5
1978	1360.1*	1333.2
1979	1069.8*	951.2
1980	1353.7*	1322.0
1981	1147.8	1480.0
1982	1116.9	1492.0
1983	1118.1	1660.0
1984	1395.9*	1018.0
1985	1755.2*	1607.0
1986	1362.0	15480
1987	1048.7*	1040.0
1988	978.0	1357.0
1989	1073.0	1284.0
1990	2214.0*	1866.0
1991	NA	
1992	NA	

Is the crop pattern responsible for the agricultural drought in Kalahandi? From the Tables 2 and 3 we find that 48 percent of its area is under forests, among the highest in Orissa, and constituting roughly 10.5 percent of the forest area of Orissa. Of the cultivated 7,62,000 hectares, foodgrain is grown on 82 percent of the area.

TABLE 2 : LAND USE IN KALAHANDI DISTRICT

Total cropped area	5,73,000ha. Total Geographical Area 11,58,000ha
Percentage of cropped area to total geographical area	49.48
Percentage of forest area to total geographical area	48.1 (198.90)
Percentage of paddy crop area to total area (cropped)	47.71 (1986-87)
Percentage of cropped area irrigated	9,21(1986-87)
Population	13,39,000 (1981)

Paddy, which require more water than other crops, is grown only on 41.7 percent of the cultivated area. Approximately 40 percent of the cropped area is under drought-resistant and dryland crops like jowar ragi and other millets along with pulses like mung and gram. There is a feeling that since the area under paddy crop but Government records show that in the past few years paddy cultivation has been declining in Kalahandi

TABLE – 3 : ARE OPERATED BY SIZE, CLASS OF OPERATIONAL HOLDING (1985-86)

	Number	Area	Percentage of total area	Percentage of total Holdings
Blow 1 ha	76,900	43,700	9.91	35.70
1 to 2 ha	60,900	83,000	18.83	28.13
2 to 4 ha	51,000	134,000	30.40	23.67
4 to 10 ha	23,500	132,600	30.08	10.90
10 and above	3,100	47,400	10.75	1.44
Total	2,15,400	400,700		

Agriculture scientists believe that Kalahandi, Koraput and adjoining parts of Chhatisgarh and Bastar in Madhya Pradesh have been the natural habitat or genetic home for a number of varieties of rice. Rice cultivation is older here than in other parts of India. Recommending the introduction of hybrid and such other crops will only aggravate the problem. In fact by careful seed selection over the centuries farmers in Kalahandi, like subsistence farmers in many other regions, have developed an astonishing range of crops. This has provided them with adequate protection against monsoonfailures, pests, blights and so on. Sadly, the people who blame the traditional crop pattern of Kalahandi do not know that, by using the least amount of chemical fertilizers, pesticides or hybrid seeds, the farmers per capita food production in Kalahandi is higher than that of Orissa and India.

There have of course been frequent crop failures in Kalahandi in the recent years, but they are neither due to meteorological nor agricultural drought. The scientists will now have to coin a new terminology for this condition. The bigges trony however is that Kalahandi has been a food surplus district all this while despite the monumental crop failures.

During the year 1989-90 per capita food production in India was 203.13kg and in Orissa 253.03kg. In Kalahandi the same year, per capita food production was 331.86 kg. which is much higher than the national average and about 30 percent higher than the state average (Table – 4). According to the final report by J. Das on Land Revenue settlement in Kalahandi district (1945-56) "During the last twenty years there was no failure of crops (in Kalahandi) except in 1038-39, 1945-46, 1946-47 and partial failure in 1947-48. There was however sufficient reserve stock to meet the requirement of the people."

For the past decade or so intellectuals, planners, politicians and many outsiders have been using terms like 'deforestation' 'drought' and 'crop failure' etc. for the poverty of Kalahandi. Now some have begun pointing their fingers towards maladies like unequal land holdings and landlessness, etc. for the poverty of Kalahndi. Now some have begun pointing their fingers towards maladies like unequal land holdings and landlessness, etc. for the poverty of the district. Some of the following statistics will reveal how landlessness is contributing to the poverty of Kalahandi.

Per capita cropped area in Kalahandi is 0.592 hectare which is the highest in Orissa. The state average per capita cropped area is 0.332 hectare.

Total number of landholdings against the population is the second highest in Kalahandi in Orissa. Bolangir tops the list with 15.71 percent followed by Kalahandi at 15.39 percent. This figure for Orissa is 12.62 percent. This clearly shows that Kalahandi and Bolangir have the least problem of landlessness compared to other districts (Table 5 and 6).

TABLE 4 : PRODUCTION OF CEREALS AND FOODGRAINS IN INDIA, ORISSA AND KALAHANDI (1989-90)

	Total Production of Cereals (MT)	Per Capita production per year (Kg)	Per Capita production per day (GM)	Total Food production (MT) (MT)	Per Capita production per year (kg.)	Per Capita production per day (Gm)
India	158010000	188.10	515	170630000	203.13	556
Orissa	6856900	217.59	596	7973570	253.03	693
Kalahandi	351680	220.90	605	528330	331.88	909

TABLE 5 : OPERATIONAL HOLDING AREA OPERATED BY SIZE, CLASS OF OPERATIONAL HOLDING IN ORISSA, 1980-81

	No. of Holdings						
District	Below one Hectare	1 to 3.99	4 to 9.99	10 and above	Total No. of Holdings	Percent No. of hodlings to Population	Percent of Land-Holdings No. Total Household
Balasore	163551	138404	19453	1662	323070	14034	87.07
Bolangir	93518	114422	17572	3746	229256	15.71	77.04
Cuttack	260800	191997	21403	1289	475489	10.27	60.41
Dhenkanal	90335	108970	781	210270	13.28	73.94	
Ganjam	195924	110964	15179	1909	323976	12.13	61.49
Kalahandi	61099	120587	21102	3333	206111	15039	73.58
Keonjhar	63070	72121	8212	495	143898	12.91	68.83
Mayurbhanj	113800	102147	14777	231611	14.84	76.34	

Phulbani	48169	52785	7846	950	109750	15.30	70.01
Puri	210277	107184	13500	1155	332116	11.30	65.22
Sambalpur	107979	148175	32917	5638	294709	12.9	61.28
Sundergarh	42528	82134	13897	1657	140216	10.4	53.19
Orissa	1559657	1501382	238705	28406	3328150	12.62	66.49

TABLE 6 : LANDHOLDINGS AND PERCENTAGE OF LAND OWNED BY DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF HOLDINGS IN DIFFERENT DISTRICTS OF ORISSA, 1980-81

	Below 1 Hectare		1 to 399 Ha.		4 to 9.99 Ha.		10 Ha. & Above	
	Percentage of total Holdings	Percentage of total Area	percentage of total Hodings	Percentage of total Area	percentage of total Holdings	Percentage of total area	Percentage of toal Holdings	Percentage of total Agea
Balasore	50.62	16.20	42.84	56.09	6.02	22.86	0.51	04.83
Bolangir	40.79	11.23	49.91	52.30	7.65	23.50	1.63	12.94
Cuttack	54.84	2138	40.37	56.40	4.50	19.31	0.27	02.90
Dhenkanal	42.96	15.70	51.82	62.75	4.84	18.02	0.37	03.51
Ganjam	60.47	23.76	34.25	48.72	4.68	20.31	0.58	07.19
Kalahandi	29.64	08.37	58.50	53.93	10.23	27.41	1.61	10.27
Keonjhar	43.82	15.33	50.11	62.19	5.70	20.32	0.34	03.03
Koraput	35.29	09.52	49.24	44.68	13.86	36.09	1.59	09.69
Mayurbhanj	49.13	18.80	44.10	54.31	6.38	23.27	0.38	03.60
Phulbani	43.88	14.61	48.09	55.59	7.14	22.80	0.86	06.98
Puri	63.31	25.87	32.27	50.10	4.06	18.69	0.34	04.32
Sambalpur	36.63	10.03	50.27	46.22	11.16	30.37	1.91	13.35
Sundergarh	30.33	08.50	58.57	56.14	9.91	27.60	1.81	07.74
Orissa	46.86	15.05	45.11	52.56	7.17	24.93	0.85	07.44

Recent statistics put the percentage of landless agricultural labourers at 31.03 percent of the total population which is not a very high figure compared with most parts of Orissa / India. Some sample survey by NGOs have shown that the percentage of landless in reality is less than the government figure of 31.03 percent.

Economic survey of 1954-55 indicates that 98.2 percent of tribals were dependent on agriculture for their livelihood, 68.2 percent were owner cultivators and only 24 percent were tenants. The tribals in Kalahandi have been less dependent on MFP (forest) than the tribals of Koraput, Phulbani, Ganjam and

hence deforestation is not the major reason for their impoverishment as some people believe.

As per the statistics of 1981, the density of population per sq. km in Kalahandi was 114. This figure for Orissa was 169 and the average density of population for India was 216. One may compare this figure with the DOP if West Bengal which is 615, Bihar – 420, Assam-254 or the neighbouring state MP with 118.

The decadal population growth in Kalahandi during 1901 to 1991 have been always less than the state or national growth, Between 1971 and 1981 the variation has been + 15.06 whereas it was 20.17 for Orissa and 24.66 for India.

TABLE 7 : DISTRICTWISE LAND DISTRIBUTION

District	Total no Holdings Above 4.0 Hectares (A)	Percentage of "A category to total no Of holdings	Percentage of total land owned by 'A' category
Balasore	2115	9.28	27.69
Cuttack	22692	4.77	22.21
Ganjam	17088	5.26	27.50
Sambalpur	38555	12.07	43.72
Puri	14655	4.40	24.01
Kalahandi	24435	11.84	37.68
Orissa	267106	8.02	32.37

An article in Sunday, (January 24-30), mentions that 26,000 "large farming household own 1,70,000 hectares of land" and citing this statistic a senior Government official emphasizes the 'lopsided distribution' of land as the problem for the poverty of Kalahandi. This is a misleading statement since each of these 26,000 house hold on an average own only 5.4 hectares of land and that too most of these lands are unirrigated. It is most unfortunate therefore that, while a large number of these 26,000 farmers are also reeling under poverty, they are branded as 'large farming households."

In some of the better-off and more fertile districts of Orissa, the land distribution is even worse which can be seen from Table 7. So one cannot attribute lopsided distribution of land as a factor for poverty in Kalahandi.

In the land settlement of 1946-56 all the lands in Kalahandi had been

classified into 20 different categories. Land having supplemental or protective irrigation facilities were put into the following categories : (1) Bahal Kharipani, (2) Berna Kharipani, (3) Mal Kharipani, (4) Bari Kharipani, (5) Bahal Pani (6) Bernal Pani (7) Mal Pani. These seven categories of lands used to get supplemental or protective irrigation from tanks, 'katas', 'sagar' (lake) and other sources which were previously owned by the exrulers or private cultivators. It is estimated that in Kalahandi district, at the time of independence such land (having protective irrigation), comprised about 48 percent of the total cultivable area. However, after independence most of these irrigation sources are 'nationalised' and in the absence of maintenance most of them are no more in a condition to provide any irrigation. This is a major reason why the total irrigated area in Kalahandi, instead of increasing, has come down to 9.21 percent of the total cropped area s in the year 1986-87. The few irrigation projects that have been undertaken in Kalahandi district so far are mostly renovation or expansion of the age old irrigation tanks formerly owned by the royal families or a few Gountias (ex-village heads) (Table 8).

TABLE B : BENEFICIARIES OF IRRIGATION PROJECTS

Name of Project	Beneficiary
Pipal Nalla MIP*	The family members Of former Ruler of Kalahandi
Jamuna Sagar MIP**	"
Devisagar MIP**	"
Karuna Sagar MIP*	The Gountia family Of Kasrupara
Asurgarh MIP**	No additional benefit to any farmer
Bandamunda MIP**	Govt. agricultural farm only

* *During state rule there was a diversion weir which was made pucca after independence.*

** *It is improvement of an existing 'kata'*

The people who have controlled the politics of Kalahandi as "People's representatives" all have irrigated lands even though for most of them agriculture is not the primary source of living. Since most of them have hardly any interest in agriculture, they have not shown any interest in developing irrigation systems in Kalahandi. If a politician has fought for the Indrabati project, It is with the ambition of setting up an industry rather than for development of agriculture.

If they had loved agriculture, they would have fought for projects like Lower Sundar, Indra, Sandul, Udanti etc. which would benefit the so called chronically drought-prone areas and bring benefit to the local people. As in the flood-prone areas, unscrupulous politicians have exploited flood to mobilize votes the politicians of Kalahandi also use drought and poverty to mobilize votes. Despite the high rainfall, amazingly high production of foodgrains, vast areas of good quality agricultural land, a comparatively low populated area and abundant natural resources, it is a fact that a vast number of the people of Kalahandi have been reeling under acute poverty. To understand the causes of poverty in Kalahandi (and many other areas similar to Kalahandi) one may look at the following four phenomena which are all inter-linked.

Phenomenon – 1 : There is no mechanism for compensating occasional crop loss. Indeptedness of farmers increases due to inadequate investment for subsequent cropping and maintenance of land. This results in – (i) Further reduction in output, (ii) increasing indebtedness (ii) increasing unemployment potential for about 280 person days per year whereas in distressed cultivation the same land is cultivated with an employment of abut 80 person days per year.

Phenomenon –II : (a) Traditional sources of irrigation (tank, pond, kata, well etc.) are neglected and (b) Forests are depleted-particularly the village 'patra' forest. Area with protectie irrigation ths gets reduced and results in crop loss and poverty.

Phenomenon –III : (a) Depletion of cottage industries (weaving, paddy dehusking, oil extraction, etc.) and (b) Depletion of forest – causing drying up of streams which has affected winter cropping which used to compensate for occasional monsoon crop losses.

Phenomenon - IV : Increased yield in the command area of Hirakud Dam has meant that paddy growers in rainfed areas face stiff competition from paddy growers in irrigated areas. This has also ruined the economic condition of farmers in non-irrigated areas of Sambalpur, Bolangir and Sundergarh districts. There has been a fall in the purchasing power of local people, a fall in the demand for paddy from Kalahandi and non-remunerative pries for paddy from Kalahandi outside and in Kalahandi. Supply of foodgrain relief from outside has discouraged growth of local food production, further reducing the demand of local food produce. The government support prices for paddy is notremunerative for the farmers in fainfed areas. In 1982-83 the support prices for paddy (common/

per quintal) was Rs. 122 which was not adequate at all. During the period 1982-1992 the cost of production has gone up by four to five times and hence in 1992 the support price of paddy should be at least Rs. 450/- per quintal. But the government has fixed it at Rs. 280. Moreover during November 1991 – January 1992 in Kalahandi (also in many other pockets of Orissa) the actual price of paddy was between Rs. 180 and Rs. 220 per quintal. This has been pauperizing the farmers and leading the entire population into the grip of poverty. Traders and moneylenders in Kalahandi – who also control the political power and the bureaucracy have been flourishing while the local farmers are sinking in poverty.

Is there a solution ? The problem of Kalahndi is primarily due to the negligence of agriculture and the farming sector and not due to the deficit in rainfall or any natural disaster, the problems are totally government created. The Indravati Project which is under construction will worsen the condition of the people of non-irrigated areas in Kalahandi, Koraput, Bolangir and Sambalpur districts.

The following are more recommendations to improve condition

(1) **Agriculture Development and Watershed Development Approach** : The traditional irrigation system in Kalahandi has always been based on micro-watershed development. So the extension of micro-watershed development could bring a revolutionary change in Kalahandi. Because of the typical land scape of Kalahandi, most of the villages form a number of micro-watersheds and there is therefore a tremendous potential for their, development which could provide protective irrigation during the Kharif and winter harvest seasons. In fact the farmers had been developing micro-watersheds quite scientifically, which have been discontinued after government interventions. A rough estimate shows that to develop microwatersheds in the non-irrigated areas of Kalahandi, to provide protective irrigation to about 80 percent of the cultivable land in the district, an amount of Rs. 5,000 million will be required which is about half the cost of the Indravati irrigation Project. This can be spent over a period of 10 years. This will also create additional employment for 3,00,000 people every year. Food production can be multiplied by four to five times and the returns will be enormous.
This will also pave the way for development of industries, trade and commerce in the district. Kalahandi alone has the potential of producing an extra one million tonne of foodgrains, if micro-watersheds are properly developed.

(2) **Stop medium/major irrigation projects** These projects only increase regional disparity and adversely affect the people.

(3) **Stop import of foodgrains from outside** : The 'relief' approach of government/NOGs needs to be stopped. All food for work programmes, and free food distribution needs to be stopped. The government has to ensure fair price to all agricultural producers by strengthening the marketing network.

(4) **Support service for the farmers to be built-up and strenghend** : There has been no cold storage and other infrastructures in the district for which onions, potatoes and other vegetables and fruits of the district are procured by the traders at throw-away prices and exported to Raipur to be imported later for sale at high prices in Kalahndi. The nexus between politicians, traders and the bureaucracy has to be destroyed. This entails a long-term process of political and social education of the people, for this alone holds the key to development in the district. Without this no development programme will have any impact on the district.

The policies of the state and national governments as well as the policies at the global level have been directly affecting the commonman living in any part of the earth. The recent changes in our government policies is going to have a tremendous impact on the life of the common people. This is likely to encourage stronger regional competition for 'survival' So, unless the people in Kalahandi are helped to be alert and active in advance they may get pushed further down.

The problems of Kalahandi are not unique Many other so-called drought –prone areas of Orissa and adjoining Madhya Pradesh and Bihar have more or less the same type of problems. Fortunately, there has been a growing consciousness among the common people of Kalahandi in recent times and a number of formal and informal groups have come up to address the issues of Kalahandi. In the administration also, there are more people now who are willing to delve deeper into the issues of Kalahandi and all this raise hopes for a better Kalahandi in the coming year.

Source : Jagadish Pradhan, 'Drought in Kalahandi : The Real Story', Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XXVIII no. 22, May 29, 1993.

MEMORANDUM FROM THE PEOPLE OF KALAHANDI

1. We, the people of Western Orissa, have come to Delhi to let the people in media, central leadership of various political parties, bureaucracy and policy makers know that even after 50 years of India's independence, nearly 90 per cent population in our region (comprising some of India's poorest districts like Kalahandi, Bolangir, Baragarh, Sambalpur, Koraput and Nuapara) has been forced to live much below the officially recognised poverty line, but issues that are crucial to our survival are no being given any attention even at a time when general elections are taking place in the country.

2. We want to let the people know here that we are not poor because Western Orissa is an impoverished region. It is our ruthless exploitation by a nexus of vested interests (private traders, money lenders, and rice mill owners) with local bureaucrats and politicians which is responsible for our extreme poverty and inhumane suffering. Policies of successive Governments at the Centre and in State have further aggravated our plight and helped our tormentors.

3. It may shock a number of people here that Kalahandi, which has become a show-case of poverty, hunger and suffering, has been over the years producing far greater per capita foodgrain than the rest of the country. However, in view of chronic hunger, widespread malnutrition and one of the highest infant and maternal mortality rates in the country, it is evident that a large chunk of our population is deprived of the foodgrain which they produce after toiling tirelessly in fields and forests of the State.

4. Even in the wake of the so-called drought in 1996, which was said to be the worst in the last three decades, and 55 to 70 per cent reported crop loss, the FCI managed to procure its highest ever procurement of paddy from Kalahandi while thousands of people suffered the chronic starvation and some of them were starved to death.

5. Over 90 per cent of our population in Western Orissa is engaged in agriculture, but there has been hardly any support or initiative from the Government for development of agriculture in the region. In what could have

been described as "richest irony". the exploitative policies formed by Governments deprive us of obtaining a fair price for their produce.

6. At a time when India is undergoing economic liberalisation and choices before the people are being expanded, we in the Kalahandi region are subjected to monopolistic practices of traders and agents appointed by the Government. We are forced to sell minor forest produce like chironji (char seeds) collected from forests to agents appointed by the Govt. at Rs. 5 to 10 per kg, whereas the market value of the same ranging is between Rs. 150 to 250 a Kg. This is not just in the case of chironji, but there are nearly 29 minor forest produce which we are forced to sell much below the market price. This incidently only helps the agents as they do not give procured forest produces to Govt. and rather sell them in open market in Orissa and other states to earn more money. The practice of appointing these monopoly agents, thus, not only proving the bane of the poor in the region, but also resulting into huge revenue losses to the State Govt.

7. We are also unable to get the minimum support price fixed by the Govt. for paddy and other crops as FCI instead of procuring directly from us appoints middlemen as agents, who force us to sell our produce much below the prices fixed by the Govt. We have no choice but to sell our hard-earned labour at a price decided by these middlemen. This plight of a large number of farmers is making agriculture unattractive to a large number of people and resulting into declining output of foodgrain. Already, people have shifted from nearly three crops every year to just one crop. The emerging scenario though common in the most of country does not augur well for India's food security situation.

8. Our biggest weakness is that we are not in a position to harness the groundwater to save the crop and entirely dependent on the seasonal rainfall. It may amaze a lot of people that Punjab where the water table has gone down considerably never face drought but in our region where water table is available at the depth of 7-8 feet, drought is recurrent phenomenon.

9. The development model being followed in our region since our independence is not at all agriculture friendly. It may be shocking for many people that

in 1948, nearly 48 per cent of cultivable land had irrigation facility which is now reduced to just 11 per cent. Out of a total 393,000 hectare cultivable land in the Kalahandi region, only 33,000 hectare has some irrigation facility.

10. Despite the widely recognised poverty conditions and backwardness of the region, not a single long or medium-term programme has been started by Central or State Govt. to improve productivity of the people and alleviate their suffering. Some highly ambitious programmes like Kalahandi – Bolangir – Koraput (KBK) were started and collapsed only on paper and provided no relief to the people.

In View of this prevailing situation, we request that :

1. Small irrigation projects and revival of traditional water harvesting structures should be given top priority in Govts. Development work so that farmers have assured supply of water to their crops and should not remain vulnerable to the vagaries of the indifferent fainfall during the monsoon season. Big irrigation projects, like the Indirawati Project which was started in 1967 at an initial cost of Rs. 167 cr. Is yet to be completed after more than 30 years and an investment of over Rs. 1500 cr, should be avoided as they do not provide any immediate relief to small and marginal farmers and also not sustainable from Ecological point of view. Already, fears are being expressed that the Indrawati project will convert Kalahandi region into a wet desert.

2. All Govt.'s Employment Assurance Schemes under IRDP should be linked with the development of agriculture in the region and funds for implementing these schemes should be given to Panchayats and Gram Sabhas.

3. Remunerative prices to farmers should be assured by eliminating the system of deploying middlemen for procurement purposes. FCI should directly procure from farmers and instead of procuring paddy it should go for rice which will provide employment to women and keep others at home instead of migrating to cities in search of employment. FCI's current practice of appointing middlemen as its agent for procurement purposes should be stopped immediately. This will result into 30 per cent more income to farmers for their produce.

4. Similarly the monopoly of individuals over minor forest produce should be eliminated immediately. This will result into nearly 200 per cent more income to the people in the region and nearly 60 per cent people will come above the poverty line overningt. Sustained campaigning against this practice of Orissa Govt. though resulted into removal of monopoly on nearly 7-8 minor forest produce, there are nearly 20 other produce which need to freed from this practice.

5. Farmers should be allowed to sell their produce any where in State and in India to get the best prices for their produce. This will significantly raise the earning of the people and will enable them to buy food from the market.

6. Bank credit should be provided to small and marginal farmers as well as landless agriculture labourers so that their exploitation at the hands of private money lenders can be checked. A large number of people have already fallen prey to money lenders and not in control of their land and other income generation assets. A study should be commissioned to understand the extent and nature of indebtedness and encouragement should be given to micro-credit programmes.

New Delhi
January 25th 1998

Udit Narayan Pradhan
President, Paschim Orissa Krishijeevi Sangha

Thakur Das Mohanand
Secretary, Paschim Orissa Krishijeevi Sangha

Jagadish Pradhan
President, Sahabhagi Vikash Abhiyan
and others.

* *(Just before the General Election to Indian Parliament held in the month of February, 1998, a delegate of 14 members from different districts of Western Orissa met leaders of various Political parties at New Delhi and had submitted the above memorandum. The delegates were from various peoples organizations and a few leading voluntary organizations of the region)*

APPENDIX-II

SOME BASIC DATA OF KALAHANDI ON RAINFALL AND CROPPING PATTERN.

ANNUAL RAINFALL IN KALAHANDI DISTRICT AND ORISSA (IN MM)

Year	Kalahandi	Orissa	Year	Kalahandi	Orissa
1977	1354	1327	1989	1073	1284
1978	1360	1333	1990	2214	1866
1979	1069	951	1991	1570	1466
1980	1354	1322	1992	1490	1344
1981	1148	1480	1993	1554	1422
1982	1117	1492	1994	2045	1700
1983	1118	1660	1995	1580	1588
1984	1396	1018	1996	1945	908
1985	1755	1607	1997	1624	-
1986	1362	1548	1998	1125	-
1987	1049	1040	1999	1210	-
1988	978	1357	2000	1164	-

CROP PATTERN IN KALAHANDI (2000 KHARIF) *

1.	Paddy area	183000 hect.
2.	Non-Paddy Area	210500 hect.
	Total Cultivable Land	**393500 hect**

NON PADDY CROPS (In Hectares)

1.	Pulses	81254
2.	Oil seeds	20168
3.	Vegetables	17334
4.	Fibres	16891
5.	Spices	1826
6.	Sugarcane	2670
7.	Other Crops / Fallow	70357

* *(Source District Administration, Kalahandi)*

(Note : Kalahandi region has still one of the best diversified cropping pattern with practice of Dry Land Agriculture and cultivation of Drought Resistant Crop Varieties. Still some people, because of ignorance, blame the farmers for growing paddy crops in large area. Paddy cropped area in Kalahandi is already less than 46.5% of the total cropped area).

BASIC INFORMATION ON THE DISTRICT KALAHANDI AND NUAPADA (CENSUS 2001)

		Kalahandi	Nuapada	Orissa
1.	Total population	1334372	530524	36706920
2.	% to Total Population of Orissa	3.64	1.45	100
3.	% of Urban Population to Total Population	7.51	5.66	14.97
4.	% of Rural Population to total Population	92.49	94.34	85.03
5.	Sex Ratio (Number of Female per 1000 males)	1000	1006	972
6.	Literacy Rate :			
	Persons	46.20	42.29	63.61
	Male	62.88	58.78	75.95
	Female	29.56	26.01	50.97
7.	% of Child Population in Age group 0-6	15.83	15.53	14.11
8.	Density of Population (per Sq. Km.)	168	138	236
9.	Percentage of Tribal Population to Total Population of the District (1991)	28.88	35.95	22.21
10.	Percentage of S.C. Population to Total Population of the District (1991)	17.01	13.09	16.20
11.	Average size of Operational Holding (in Hect.) 1990-91	1.94	1.77	1.34
12.	Per capita availability of foodgrain in kg. (1994-95)	245	253	203
13.	% of Forest Area of the District to State Forest Area (1995-96)	6.87	2.0	100

APPENDIX-IV

STATE OF THE POVERTY ALLEVIATION SCHEMES IN KALAHANDI DISTRICT - AN EXAMPLE

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER & AUDITOR GENERAL

(REPORT NO. 3 (CIVIL) OF 1999)

"Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS), A Centrally sponsored scheme, was being implemented in the State from January 1994 with the objective of providing 100 days gainful employment to the rural poor during lean agricultural season and to created durable and productive community assets.

Implementation of EAS in the State of Orissa was marked by serious and large scale malpractice, doubtful payments and employment to large number of unregistered persons and fictitious persons. Further various irregularities in Muster Rolls and delayed payments raised doubts about genuineness of payments.

Reports of employment sent to Government of India differed significantly from what was reported by DRDAs. The scheme was not monitored at any level. Records in regard to creation of durable assets were not maintained and assets were not physically verified by inspections and, therefore, their creation was doubtful. Serious irregularities noticed in implementation of the scheme call for investigation.

Huge amount of scheme funds remained unspent during 1993-98. State Government delayed releasing their share by 11 to 154 days.

(Paragraph 3.3.5.1)

Against the norm of employment of 100 days per person per year only 5.88 to 45.77 mandays were generated in Jharsuguda and Phulbani districts. In Kalahandi district employment generation was less than 10 days per person per year.

{Paragraph 3.3.6 (b)}

Large number of family cards were not distributed by BDOs. Line departments were issued with cards though they were not the designated authority for issue of cards. Proper account of cards was not furnished in Kalahandi district.

{Paragraph 3.3.6 (c) (ii)}

Rs. 28.91 lakh were paid to labourers after a delay of 1 month to 1 year by ASCO and Horticulturist, Bhawanipatna. The payment was not made in the presence of Sarpanch and was, therefore, doubtful.

{Paragraph 3.3.6 (e)}

In disregard of norms, DRDAs, Kalahandi and Mayurbhanj released Rs. 4.12 crore in excess for Ber and mixed fruit plantations in private land

{Paragraph 3.3.8.1)}

In Bhawanipatna, plantation raised in private land at a cost of Rs. 14 lakh was not found in existence during physical verification.

(Paragraph 3.3.8.6)"

(Note : Various studies show that at the time of independence people in this region were getting more than 268 days of work in a year. Because of the faulty development policies taken up by successive Governments, during past several years, unemployment has become acute all over Orissa and there is exodus of agricultural workers from Rural areas to the cities in search of work. If governemnt is unable to keep it's promise of providing even 100 days of work in a year to the Agricultural Workers and in district like Kalahandi if only 10 day's of work is provided, that too as per the government records, can you put the blame on the 'Drought' for the prevailing poverty of Kalahandi ? Sahabhagi Vikash Abhiyan).

About Sahabhagi Vikash Abhiyan :

Sahabhagi Vikash Abhiyan (S.V.A) is a collective of several Community Based Organisations and individuals dedicated to fighting poverty and injustice and to work for a more human world through the process of sustainable development efforts. Sahabhagi Vikash Abhiyan works in collaboration with local Community Groups, like minded Voluntary Organisations working at regional and international level, Concerned Individuals as well as Government and Non Government organisations to achieve greater impact towards attaining it's objectives.

Sahabhagi Vikash Abhiyan promotes the development activities through action research, educational activities and provide support services to social workers and voluntary organisations in Orissa.

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(All the publications of Gaunli Vichar, S.V.A. and it's member organizations are available in all the above addresses)

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